



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Departmental Operations and Coordination



Delivering Results

to Colonias and
Farmworker
Communities

www.hud.gov

Southwest Border
Region, Colonias
and Migrant/
Farmworker
Initiatives,
Summer 2004.

*Cover photo:
A family from the
West Alto Bonito
colonia in Texas
stands in the area
that was once their
kitchen, living room
and bedroom. The
rehabilitation to their
home will double
its size and include
indoor plumbing,
electricity and a
septic system.*

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY

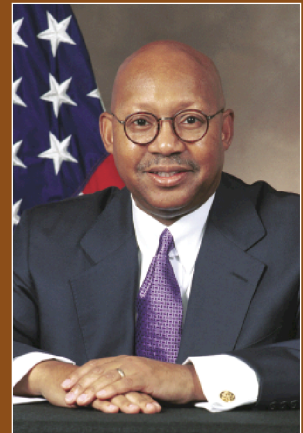
Dear Colleague:

Because I was born of humble means in Texas, I understand the significant challenges and deep poverty along the U.S.-Mexico border and in other rural "pockets of poverty" where farmworkers live. Residents in the colonias of the Southwest Border and farmworker communities experience some of the worst housing conditions in the United States. I am proud that in Fiscal Year 2003, HUD committed \$46.1million in funding to meet the desperate needs of these rural, underserved populations. This is an increase of more than \$5.2 million over the Fiscal Year 2002 level.

Through HUD's Southwest Border Region, Colonias and Migrant/Farmworker Initiatives, the Department coordinates the efforts of numerous HUD programs that impact these distressed communities, targeting existing resources to make a difference. As you read this report, you will see some powerful examples of how a variety of municipal and nonprofit organizations have leveraged HUD investments to meet locally determined needs in rural America.

I applaud all the communities and organizations that are using HUD funding to help families climb the ladder of self-sufficiency. I hope this report inspires new and creative partnerships that will continue to better the quality of life for colonia residents and farmworkers.

*Alphonso Jackson
Secretary*



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HUD'S COMMITMENT...

HUD is dedicated to improving the lives of people in rural, underserved communities across America. As you read this report, you will notice two important themes:

- *One is HUD's commitment to poor communities along the U.S.-Mexico border and other areas where migrants and farmworkers reside.*
- *The other is the results these communities are achieving by using HUD funding to plant the seeds of change.*

The success stories in this booklet demonstrate the results that are possible when local and federal partners develop a vision, define a plan, and deliver on that plan. By listening to local people, HUD has found practical ways to bring federal funding into communities with critical needs. These communities have applied their creativity and commitment to develop a vision, leverage HUD funds, and get results. These partnerships are making a difference in the daily lives of people who otherwise endure poor quality housing, housing discrimination, predatory lending, dangerous unpaved roads, polluted drinking water, and more.

This report highlights our goals and what we've achieved. Resources are identified throughout the booklet and on page 32, so that you can follow up.

We hope this information will be useful to communities along the Southwest Border, among migrants and farmworkers, and to other federal agencies committed to changing lives.

SOME FACTS ABOUT COLONIAS

- In simplest terms, “colonia” is a Spanish word for a neighborhood or community.
- These rural, economically distressed communities located within 150 miles of the U.S.-Mexican border lack the basic infrastructure most Americans take for granted – decent, safe housing, running water, electricity, and paved roads. Colonia residents struggle with issues often associated with the developing third-world countries.
- The Texas Attorney General’s office estimates that there are over 1,800 colonias in Texas. This is more than any of the other border states – Arizona, New Mexico, or California.
- The Border Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that 97 percent of colonia residents are Hispanic.
- Compared to the national poverty rate of 12 percent, colonia residents are much poorer. The Housing Assistance Council reports that 32 percent of border Hispanics in “nonmetro” areas like the colonias are in poverty – nearly triple the rate elsewhere in the country.
- According to the Housing Assistance Council, the average annual income in the colonias is only \$7,000 to \$11,000.

MODEL COLONIA: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR TOUGH PROBLEMS

The Model Colonia is representative of HUD's efforts to involve local residents and key partners in the process of making real change happen.

Doña Ana County, the largest of the eleven New Mexico border counties, has the highest number of colonias in the state of New Mexico. And of those 37 Doña Ana colonias, Vado/Del Cerro residents live in some of the poorest conditions. Vado began as a farming settlement in 1886, and Del Cerro was established as an extension by farmworkers thereafter. According to 1999 figures, 33 percent of the families in Vado/Del Cerro live below the poverty level. In addition, 77 percent of the population over 25 are not high school graduates, so families tend to survive on low wage employment at nearby dairies or truck stops. But Vado/Del Cerro also has a very active and involved group of partners committed to community improvement.

To show what county, state, federal, and nonprofit partners can do together to improve the lives of colonia residents, HUD has funded a comprehensive, community-based planning process in Vado/Del Cerro.



Mobile homes that do not meet federal manufactured housing construction and safety standards are common in Vado and Del Cerro.



Paving roads will allow school buses in to the colonia of Del Cerro, so children can be transported to school safely.

Doña Ana
county



Typical housing stock in the colonia of Vado.



Vado
colonia

HUD funding is leveraging other federal and private sector investors to demonstrate how a colonia can be transformed into an economically and socially viable community.

Anticipated outcomes of the Model Colonia are:

- A comprehensive plan that paves the way for public and private investment, leading to substantial improvement in living conditions.
- Elimination of unplanned, colonias-style growth. All new homes in the community will be required to meet basic housing and infrastructure standards.
- Enhanced coordination among federal, state, and local agencies.
- A model that can be replicated in other colonias or farmworker communities.

The Model Colonia reflects HUD's broadest goals. It will help ensure equal opportunity in housing, increase homeownership opportunities, and promote decent, affordable housing. It promotes the participation of faith-based and community organizations, and will strengthen communities by improving economic conditions.

MODEL COLONIA PARTNERS: INVESTING IN CHANGE

Many organizations are helping HUD transform Vado/Del Cerro:

COMMUNITY LEADERS. Vado/Del Cerro residents have taken ownership of the project and are guiding priorities for action. Centro Fuerza y Unidad, a grassroots organization, has been the driving force behind progress in Del Cerro for over 10 years. It currently receives HUD technical assistance so it can obtain a nonprofit designation, which will open new opportunities for funding.

DOÑA ANA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS. The county has designated the Vado/Del Cerro Community as the initial Model Colonia for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Model Colonia Initiative and has prioritized infrastructure needs in the county's other 36 colonias. The county has also created a new Community Outreach Division within the Department of Health and Human Services and a special Coordinator to work specifically on colonias.

NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATURE. Southern New Mexico legislators have pledged to assist with the model colonia. In the 2004 legislative session, legislators introduced multiple Model Colonia bills, and \$285,000 was secured.

VADO WATER MUTUAL DOMESTIC ASSOCIATION. This nonprofit organization has advocated for infrastructure improvements in the community of Vado since the 1960's.

LAS CRUCES-DOÑA ANA HOUSING AUTHORITY. This public housing authority has committed to use proceeds from the sales of existing housing authority units to purchase land for an 18-unit affordable housing pilot using self-help/alternative materials. Model colonia land has been purchased, and the development process has begun.

GADSDEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT. GISD will be locating a new elementary school in the Model Colonia. Construction is slated to begin soon, and the school will open in fall 2005.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS such as Las Cruces Affordable Housing Inc. (a Community Housing Development Organization), New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, the Enterprise Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and the Housing Assistance Council are contributing as well.

COLONIA/FARMWORKER INITIATIVES . . .

HUD began its coordinated focus on the Southwest Border, colonias, and migrant/farmworker communities in 1996. In 2001, a Department-wide Southwest Border, Colonias, and Migrant/Farmworker Task Force developed a unified plan with specific actions assigned to HUD's different program offices. Implementation managers from these program offices have been turning the plan into action.

A small team is dedicated full-time to coordination of this effort. This Southwest Border, Colonias, and Migrant/Farmworker Initiatives (SWBR) work group—with staff assigned in HUD headquarters and field offices in states with colonias and high farmworker populations—is part of an office that reports directly to HUD's Deputy Secretary.

HUD has also begun developing partnerships with other federal agencies to address the complex needs along the border and among migrant farmworkers.

HUD'S SWBR TASK FORCE IMPLEMENTATION MANAGERS

- Administration
- Community Planning and Development
- Departmental Operations and Coordination
- Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity
- Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
- Field Policy and Management
- General Counsel
- Government National Mortgage Association
- Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control
- Housing
- Policy Development and Research
- Public and Indian Housing

PART OF HUD'S STRATEGIC VISION

With a well-placed leadership team, an agency-wide task force, Secretarial endorsement of a specific action plan, formally designated implementation managers, outreach specialists, and interagency collaborations, HUD's model for action is delivering results.

The Department's strategic plan sets the framework for these efforts. At the core of the process are the six strategic goals, which enable HUD's organizations to work together effectively to accomplish the President's priorities and to serve the needs of local communities. The following pages highlight some of the significant accomplishments achieved in response to each of the strategic goals.



In Oregon, new year-round housing for 32 farmworker families managed by the Umatilla Housing Authority.

HUD'S STRATEGIC GOALS

- Increasing homeownership opportunities.
- Promoting decent, affordable housing.
- Strengthening communities.
- Ensuring equal opportunity in housing.
- Maintaining high standards of management and accountability.
- Promoting participation of faith-based and community organizations.

strategic
goals

**HUD FY 03 FUNDING RELATED TO COLONIAS
AND MIGRANT/FARMWORKER COMMUNITIES¹**

Funding Mechanism	Amount
Rural Housing and Economic Development Program	\$ 5,330,172
Youthbuild	\$ 3,100,000
McKinney-Vento ²	\$13,832,107
Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS	\$ 677,377
Special Needs Assistance Programs	\$ 250,000
Self-Help Housing Opportunities Programs	\$ 660,000
Housing Counseling	\$ 1,089,545
Fair Housing Initiatives Program	\$ 1,358,740
Colonia Fair Housing Monitoring Contract	\$ 400,000
Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities	\$ 600,000
Departmental Operations and Coordination Activities	\$ 169,983
Community Outreach Partnership Centers	\$ 1,192,397
New Mexico State University Economic Development Research	\$ 179,344
Accessible and Affordable Geographical Information Systems	\$ 200,000
Policy Development and Research Activities (Mapping Colonias, Housing Assistance Center, Residential Financing in Colonias)	\$ 384,000
Family Self-Sufficiency Program ³	\$ 635,730
Lead Hazard Control Grant Program	\$ 2,000,000
Community Development Block Grant (State Set-Aside)	\$ 14,059,600
TOTAL FUNDING	\$46,118,995

¹ Funding that either directly impacts colonias/farmworkers or impacts counties with designated colonias or more than 10,000 migrant or farmworkers.

² HUD estimates a minimum of \$13 million of the Homeless Assistance Awards will impact colonias and communities with high concentrations of migrants/farmworkers.

³ Amount consists of New HCV FSS Program (\$44,608), Renewal HCV FSS Programs (\$444,134), and Operating Subsidy for Public Housing FSS Program Coordinators (\$146,988).

MAKING BIG INVESTMENTS IN COLONIAS AND FARMWORKERS

*In Fiscal Year 2003, HUD invested **over \$46.1 million** in the colonias and in migrant/farmworker communities through the Department's competitive awards, formula grants, and other HUD programs. Major highlights include:*

Approximately \$5.3 million in **Rural Housing and Economic Development** grants to organizations in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona for projects in the colonias and in migrant/farmworker communities in Arkansas, New Mexico, and Virginia.

Over \$1.3 million in **Fair Housing Initiatives Program** grants to organizations working with colonias in Arizona, California, and New Mexico and for work that impacts migrant and/or farmworkers in Idaho, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington.

Over \$1 million in **Housing Counseling** grants: \$250,000 through competitive grants to projects working with colonia residents in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas and over \$839,000 in funds to organizations providing counseling that impacts colonias in these border states and migrant/farmworker communities in Colorado and Florida.

Over \$3.1million in **Youthbuild** grants to increase construction or rehabilitate homes in colonias-designated counties or in counties with migrant/farmworker populations in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas.

Over \$13.8 million in **Continuum of Care** and **Emergency Shelter Homeless Assistance** grants that will impact colonias and communities with high concentrations of migrants and farmworkers in California, Florida, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

Investments of \$14 million made available in **State Community Development Block Grant Program** (CDBG) Colonia Set-Aside funds to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

A \$2 million **Lead Hazard Control Grant** to address housing-based lead hazards in Cochise County, Arizona.

INCREASING HOMEOWNERSHIP . . .



Centro Campesino-Farmworker Center employs Youthbuild students to construct Florida City Villages. Most of the 250 new homes in the development have been purchased by farmworkers.



housing
counseling

HUD's **Housing Counseling Program** helps people improve their housing conditions and successfully meet the responsibilities of tenancy and homeownership. These services are especially critical in colonias, where there is a severe lack of decent housing. The unique and complicated nature of title and property ownership in colonias and the lack of banking experience of many residents make homebuyers and homeowners in these communities particularly vulnerable to inflated appraisals, unreasonably high interest rates, unaffordable repayment terms, and other predatory practices that can lead to a loss of equity, increased debt, default, and eventually foreclosure.

Since Fiscal Year 2002, HUD has set aside a portion of housing counseling grants to help local agencies with special skills in counseling low- and moderate-income families work in the colonias.

West Tennessee Legal Services, Inc. (WTLS) is one such housing counseling grantee helping colonia residents fight back in the legal arena. Armed with \$220,000 in housing counseling funding, WTLS and its five affiliated legal services agencies in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California are tackling the complex property and land issues that are a fact of life in many colonias. Texas Rural Legal Aid, New Mexico Legal Aid, Southern Arizona Legal Aid, California Rural Legal

FOR COLONIA RESIDENTS

Assistance and Community Legal Services are using this housing counseling grant to address so called “contract for deed” property arrangements. Under a contract for deed, the buyer is not given the title of the land until it is paid for in full. Failure to make one payment can result in loss of the property. WTLS and its affiliates have so far helped 646 clients obtain clear title to their land, combat predatory lending, and escape unfair rental practices.

In one case, Managing Attorney Anthony Young and law clerk Brenda Sandoval of Arizona’s Community Legal Services championed the rights of a colonia resident in a Yuma County RV park to live in the safe and sanitary conditions most Americans take for granted. The sewer system was improperly connected to the resident’s trailer, and junk cars and tires were scattered throughout the park. When the resident complained, the park owner tried to evict him without legal notice. Community Legal Services took the case to court, where the owner’s eviction action was dismissed. The court also ordered the park owner to properly connect the sewer and remove any junk cars next to the resident’s trailer space. Later, when the resident decided to move out of the park and the owner tried to keep his trailer, Community Legal Services successfully negotiated for the resident to move with his trailer.

HUD is committed to increasing the number of agencies like WTLS that are approved to provide housing counseling in the colonias and farmworker communities. HUD’s Homeownership Centers – in Santa Ana, California; Denver, Colorado; and Atlanta, Georgia – have each launched target outreach initiatives. Special workshops focusing on how to become a HUD-approved counseling agency and the requirements of the housing counseling program have been held in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida.

COCHISE COUNTY, ARIZONA, TARGETS HUD MONIES TO COLONIAS

The Housing Authority of Cochise County has received a \$2 million grant from HUD's **Lead Hazard Control Program** to remediate lead hazards in 108 privately owned housing units in colonias in Tombstone and Bisbee. The program will reduce the risk that lead paint will poison the county's children by controlling existing lead hazards, providing services to families of high-risk children, and building the county's capacity to prevent childhood lead poisoning. Because of Cochise County's Lead Hazard Control Grant, the Housing Authority is poised to play an important role in Arizona's Strategic Plan for eliminating childhood lead poisoning in Arizona by 2010.

Cochise County also received a \$677,377 grant to implement the **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** Housing Assistance Program (HHAP). Organizations that provide housing have teamed with agencies that provide supportive services to focus on the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS in the colonias, especially Hispanic farmworkers and chronically homeless people. The Housing Authority of Cochise County will provide eligible families with tenant-based rental assistance, housing information services, and emergency housing assistance like short-term rent, mortgage, and utility payments. This Special Project of National Significance will assist approximately 120 units of housing. A multidisciplinary team of partners including the County Health Department, City of Douglas Housing Department, St. John's Episcopal Church, Southwest Fair Housing Council, and Bisbee Coalition for the Homeless will strengthen the project by making a variety of supportive services available.

PROMOTING DECENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING . . .

The **Money Smart Financial Education Curriculum**, sponsored by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), helps public housing residents and entire colonia and migrant/farmworker communities outside the financial mainstream strengthen their money skills, learn the value of commercial banking, and begin moving to economic self-sufficiency.

This is part of a bigger HUD-FDIC collaboration that expanded access to Money Smart training through 3,400 public housing authorities across the country.

HUD specialists were certified as Money Smart trainers to provide financial literacy training along the Southwest Border and in migrant/farmworker communities. Together, HUD and FDIC staff held 35 outreach sessions in Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington, educating 448 people about using Money Smart with residents of the Southwest Border, colonias, and farmworker communities.

Over 200 individuals now certified as Money Smart trainers in these areas are delivering training to rural, underserved communities in these states. In Florida, for example, HUD partnered with a Miami-based Federal Reserve Bank to create a more basic financial education program adopted from Money Smart. This program targets farmworkers in Collier and Palm Beach Counties and is estimated to serve 250 farmworker families in 2004.

HUD understands that the more public housing residents and colonia and farmworker communities know about credit and banking services, the more likely they are to build real assets in the form of savings, a down payment on a home, and other benefits of good financial health.

OUT OF THE COURTROOM AND INTO THE NEIGHBORHOODS

“Our needs on the border are great, but our wallets are small. Thanks to the free legal work, we are able to put our limited monies directly into projects in the community.”

—Robert Calvillo
CDCST Executive Director



Texas C-BAR and HUD grants build new homes like this in South Texas.

Xavier Pena, a lawyer at Vinson & Elkins, L.L.P. in Houston, grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Xavier has found a rewarding opportunity to use his expertise as an attorney to help the Community Development Corporation of South Texas (CDCST) build affordable housing in poor South Texas neighborhoods near his hometown.

Pena is helping CDCST work with local government entities to implement a tax increment financing plan that will encourage development in low income neighborhoods.

The program that put Pena and CDCST together is Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources (Texas C-BAR), a HUD **Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED)** grantee.

Texas C-BAR is a statewide transactional pro bono project that provides opportunities for attorneys to work with community-based nonprofits building low-income housing and pursuing other forms of community development. Thanks to a \$450,000 RHED grant, Texas C-BAR is able to provide attorney and nonprofit outreach and develop additional online resources for nonprofit organizations in rural areas and along the Texas-Mexico border.

And CDCST is not the only one who benefits from the relationship. As a Texas C-BAR volunteer, Pena can use his legal skills to really make a difference in people's lives: “Since I am originally from South Texas, it is especially gratifying to be able to work with an organization that helps a community that I grew up in.”

PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS BECOME HOMEOWNERS

HUD continues its substantive outreach and technical assistance to public housing agencies along the Southwest Border Region:

- **Homeownership Voucher Program.** The Housing Choice Voucher Program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to choose and lease or purchase safe, decent, and affordable privately-owned rental housing. Homeownership vouchers are a particular kind of voucher that assists first-time homeowners with their monthly homeownership expenses. HUD negotiated a 2-year, \$1 million cooperative agreement with the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation to provide training and technical assistance on the homeownership option to public housing agencies (PHAs). PHAs whose jurisdictions include colonias or migrant/farmworker communities are eligible for this technical training and assistance.
- **Family Self-Sufficiency Program.** Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a HUD program that encourages communities to help assisted families get jobs that will lead to economic independence and self-sufficiency. Through the FSS program, PHAs work with local partners to develop a comprehensive program that gives participating FSS family members the skills and experience they need to get living wage jobs. HUD awarded \$635,730 in FSS Program Coordinator funding for Public Housing Authorities in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas jurisdictions that include colonia communities.

STRENGTHENING COLONIAS . . .

HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP), established in 1994, encourages colleges and universities to make a difference in their communities.

Two OUP grant programs that have had an impact in underserved communities like the colonias are the **Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) Program**, which provides 3-year grants of up to \$400,000, and the **Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) Program**, which funds 3-year grants up to \$600,000 to help universities address community development needs.

In this tenth anniversary year of the Office of University Partnerships, OUP celebrates three examples of grantees that have made a difference in colonia communities. These Texas institutions have all used COPC or HSIAC funding to leverage real change in the lives of colonia residents.



In Fiscal Year 2003, OUP awarded colonia-related grants totaling almost \$1.8 million.

The University of California at Riverside and the University of Texas at El Paso received COPC funding totaling \$1.1 million, and San Diego State University received a HSIAC grant totaling \$600,000.

fiscal year
2003

AND MIGRANT/FARMWORKER COMMUNITIES

Promotoras: A Local Link

The Colonias Program of Texas A&M University used a COPC grant to answer a fundamental question: How can you link colonias residents to available resources?

Researchers discovered that colonia residents do not trust official written notices, and often feel embarrassed about their limited education and English language skills. The solution is to have trusted community leaders hit the streets to talk face-to-face.

Armed with this knowledge, the Colonias Program recruited and trained trusted local residents known as *promotoras*, who get the word out about programs related to housing, education, workforce development, health, and other areas. Another COPC grant supported the first six promotoras, who worked within ten colonias near Laredo, Texas.

These promotoras have since provided critical links to other successful Texas A&M projects, such as a micro-enterprise development initiative launched in 2001 in the Laredo area.

Promotoras partnered with Dr. Cecilia Guisti from Texas A&M (and a 2002 HUD Urban Scholar) and with Texas Rural Aid to identify colonia residents interested in starting a small business. The promotoras combined home visits with training from local partners in the financial world to build the skills of interested residents.

The promotoras initiative, the signature achievement of the Texas A&M Colonias Program, has been replicated in 18 other colonias along the 1,248 mile Texas-Mexico border. Each year, 50 to 100 promotoras serve within their colonias from Brownsville to El Paso.



Promotoras receive training in Progreso Community Resource Center.

"BIZ CAMP" INTRODUCES STUDENTS TO BUSINESS WORLD



Biz Camp develops middle school students' entrepreneurial skills.

Like most middle school students, sisters Karen and Kimberly Lopez in Rio Bravo, Texas, sometimes toy with the idea of becoming doctors. Other days, they imagine themselves as owners of an ice cream shop and, when they feel brave enough, speculate about a car sales business.

With the help of a unique summer business camp offered through Texas A&M International University's Texas Center for Border Economics and Enterprise Development, the girls are starting to explore entrepreneurship as an option. "Biz Camp," supported by a HUD **Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities Initiative**, aims to increase economic development in colonias through entrepreneurial education in middle schools.

The program offers daily classes for sixth to eighth grade students in the colonia communities of Rio Bravo and El Cenizo just outside Laredo.

Biz Camp teaches basics of personal finance, tools for managing money, traits of entrepreneurs, recognition of needs to service markets, and basic steps of starting a business.

At Biz Camp, students not only receive instruction but also hands-on experience at checking stock prices. Kimberly, Karen, and their classmates browse the *Wall Street Journal* daily and jot down their chosen company's dividends in a makeshift checkbook. "This way, I can see how much money I made," said Karen. Kimberly is learning to save money. "I'm learning the difference between a manager and an employee. Bosses work extra hours, but are paid more," she observes.

UT-PAN AM REACHES OUT IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY

The University of Texas-Pan American Community Outreach Partnership Center addresses the need for affordable housing in low-income, severely distressed colonias and rural communities in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. A comprehensive strategic planning process, including town hall meetings and bilingual surveys and seminars, gave COPC first-hand knowledge of the housing conditions of rural residents. Based on the needs identified, UTPA formed a partnership with housing providers, and a community advisory committee was established.

The first outreach effort included disseminating information at organized colonia meetings, town hall meetings, and planned housing fairs. Next was homeownership education for low-income families through bilingual workshops, followed by focus on increasing access to affordable housing and rehab programs for families traditionally isolated from available resources.

COPC's efforts marked the first time in the history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley that nonprofit organizations involved in housing programs combined their resources to launch a coordinated and systematic attack on the problems of housing in rural neighborhoods.



A COPC mini-housing fair distributes information on homeownership.

Rio Grande
Valley

"Rural places face extra challenges in providing affordable homes, clean reliable water, and good jobs for their residents. It can be difficult for them even to find out what resources are available. The Rural Gateway uses modern technology to distribute good old-fashioned expertise."

*—Moises Loza
HAC Executive Director*

RURAL GATEWAY FACILITATES CHANGE

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) is using a \$770,383 award from HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development to implement a new "Rural Housing and Economic Development Gateway" that will help rural communities—including the colonias and communities with high migrant or farmworker populations—improve their local housing and economic conditions. HAC, which has been helping local organizations build affordable homes in rural America since 1971, is working with two partners, each with more than 30 years of nationwide rural development experience. The Rural Community Assistance Program addresses rural water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal issues, and the National Congress for Community Economic Development works with local community development corporations to produce affordable housing and create jobs.

The Rural Gateway will develop the capacity of local nonprofit leaders to help their own communities. It will connect rural organizations with information, technical assistance, training, and investment capital to help them develop, rebuild, and preserve affordable housing, local economies, and essential infrastructure. The Gateway will also engage private sector organizations to establish economic development initiatives in rural areas. To contact the Rural Gateway, call 1-877-RURAL-26 (toll free) or go to www.ruralhome.org/gateway.

ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HOUSING . . .

Fair Housing Fact-Finding in Colonias

HUD works in cooperation with builders, landlords, tenants, and other stakeholders to ensure the rights of equal housing opportunity and fair housing choice without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status. HUD has launched a fact-finding, education, and outreach initiative in the colonias to identify barriers to fair housing and to promote public awareness of fair housing laws.

The study is compiling information from colonia-serving organizations and residents of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas colonias on land title reform, mortgage financing schemes, and housing rehabilitation and reform. Getting the facts will help people in the colonias know their housing rights and exercise them without discrimination.

Taking Stock of Florida Farmworker Needs

An innovative needs assessment of farmworkers in Manatee County, Florida, is a perfect example of what can happen when local governments, nonprofit organizations, and HUD work together to meet locally identified needs.

The County of Manatee and the Farmworker Alliance (now known as the Latino Community Network of Manatee County) realized that the 18,000 farmworkers and family members who live in Manatee County were woefully underserved by housing, health, and legal service providers.



A surveyor interviews a mother who picks and packs tomatoes.



Farmworkers in South Florida harvest zucchini.

A primary reason was the lack of data about the significant needs of the Manatee County farmworkers and their families. County Commissioner Patricia Glass explains, “There is a terrible lack of understanding of the problems. People need to understand...that this is not a static population but a large population that is increasing.”

Thanks to a \$70,000 investment from HUD’s Office of Departmental Operations and Coordination, the Latino Community Network, county agencies, nonprofits, and community stakeholders have launched an indepth survey of the farmworkers that will leave no doubt as to particular needs this population faces. Trained surveyors completed over 100 of the 600 targeted interviews in the first month alone.

Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center, Catholic Charities Diocese of Venice, Head Start Coalition, the School Board and Community Services Department of Manatee County, and other partners are now using concrete data to meet the needs of this significant subpopulation.

Local elected officials have been supportive, and local media attention has been very positive. As Commissioner Glass sees it, the study demonstrates “the depth of the contribution that hardworking farmworkers bring to the economy.”

HUD GRANTEES INCREASE FAIR HOUSING NETWORK

HUD provides grants to agencies that educate the public about their housing rights through its **Fair Housing Initiatives Program** and to agencies that enforce violations of fair housing laws through its **Fair Housing Assistance Program**. In Fiscal Year 2003, HUD trained these grantees in colonias/farmworker issues and increased networking and communication among the agencies working in the border region.

HUD will continue its commitment to training by offering a workshop on “outreach to underserved communities” during a major national conference in 2004.

Over \$1.3 million in Fair Housing Initiatives Program grants were awarded for projects that serve rural and immigrant populations in colonias or migrant farmworker areas. This money is being used to inform and educate the public about the rights and obligations under federal, state, and local fair housing laws in the colonia communities of Arizona, California, and New Mexico, and for work that impacts migrant and/or farmworkers in Idaho, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington.

MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS . . .

HUD is committed to improving the accountability of the Department to the American people. As a part of this effort, HUD is partnering with other federal agencies to improve customer service.

For example, in November 2003, HUD convened a **Federal Interagency Partnership for the Southwest Border and Farmworker Communities**, inviting federal agencies providing services to migrants, farmworkers, and colonia residents to join the Department in coordinating services and programs.

The partnership challenges participants to develop innovative joint ventures and to supplement each other's programs and services. The 14 members pledged to establish a continuing dialogue on colonia/farmworker issues and to coordinate and streamline delivery of programs and services to the affected populations.



Several opportunities for collaboration have already presented themselves. For example, the Department of Justice Office of Civil Rights, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Education Office of Migrant Education, the Department of Health and Human Service Offices of Minority and Special Populations and International Health Affairs, the Internal Revenue Service Office of Wage and Investment, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Corporation for National Service, and the General Services Administration "Computers for Learning" Program are exploring with HUD how to display services and resources jointly through avenues such as HUD's community kiosks.

OF MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP FOR THE SOUTHWEST BORDER AND FARMWORKER COMMUNITIES

- **Corporation for National Service:** www.nationalservice.org
- **Department of Agriculture**
 - Rural Development: www.rurdev.usda.gov
 - Rural Housing Service: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs
 - Rural Utilities Service: www.usda.gov/rus/water/index.htm
- **Department of Commerce**
 - Census Bureau: www.census.gov
- **Department of Education**
 - Office of Migrant Education: www.ed.gov/programs/mep/index.html
- **Department of Health and Human Services**
 - Border Health Office: www.hrsa.gov
 - Minority and Special Populations: www.bphc.hrsa.gov/migrant
- **Department of Housing and Urban Development:** www.hud.gov,
espanol.hud.gov
- **Department of Justice**
 - Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment:
www.usdoj.gov/crt/activity.htm#osc
- **Department of Labor:** <http://www.dol.gov>
- **Department of the Treasury**
 - Community Development Financial Institutions: www.cdfifund.gov
- **Environmental Protection Agency**
 - Office of Pesticide Programs: www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety
- **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation:**
www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/index.html
- **General Services Administration:** www.computers.fed.gov
- **North American Development Bank:** www.nadbank.org
- **Small Business Administration**
 - Community Adjustment and Investment Program: www.sba.gov

ADDITIONAL INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Using GIS to Monitor Colonia Development

This HUD-initiated project demonstrates how state-of-the-art technology can turn research data into practical information. Data from the affordable Geographic Information System (GIS)—a computer mapping technology—are improving housing and community development programs in colonias along the 2,000-mile border. Five federal agencies in the United States and Mexico, along with dozens of state and local governments and nonprofit organizations, are partners in this unique urban planning and colonias monitoring project.

In eight “sister cities” (Eagle Pass, Texas, and Piedras Negras, Mexico; El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico; Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Mexico; and Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Mexico), U.S. and Mexican groups incorporate GIS technology into their daily operations. Helping local governments maintain and analyze the data has developed strong local partnerships that improve living conditions for more than 1.5 million people along both sides of the border.

Integrating Expertise in the San Joaquin Valley

The Central San Joaquin Valley of California, one of the world’s most productive agricultural regions, is also home to some of the poorest Californians, including many farmworkers. Rapid population growth, lack of affordable housing, and demographic shifts bring the Valley unique and critical challenges.

Because economic development, housing, transportation, water resources, health policy, and other Valley concerns are interrelated, President Bush implemented a Federal Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Central San Joaquin Valley in February 2002. Three projects – the Regional Jobs Initiatives, the Clean Air/Energy Efficiency Initiative, and the Financial Education Initiative – combine the collective resources and expertise of 17 agencies with local efforts to deliver targeted results. A report on progress by the Task Force can be accessed at www.huduser.org.

USDA AND HUD WORK CLOSELY ALONG SOUTHWEST BORDER

Maintaining high standards of management and accountability means coordinating programs and resources across federal agencies to maximize their impact in communities. As an example, in June 2003, HUD and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement establishing a cooperative effort to improve housing and economic conditions along the Southwest Border. "It is vital that we do more to encourage minority homeownership, especially in the Colonias of the Southwest, where hundreds of thousands live in substandard conditions," said Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman.

Under the agreement, the two departments will coordinate the delivery of programs and services to residents of the U.S.-Mexico border region, colonias, and areas heavily populated by very low-income migrant farmworkers. Cooperation through cross-marketing of programs, cross-training of staff, joint preparation of materials, and collaboration on pilot projects are all possible through the Memorandum of Agreement, signed during the National Rural Housing Summit held by USDA Rural Development.

Other joint activities between USDA and HUD will include exchanging information on housing, community, and economic conditions, and working together on research projects involving colonia and farmworker communities.



Farmworkers at a "Get Help" clinic receive a free lunch for participating in a "point in time" survey to establish Florida homeless needs.

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION . . .

In 2003, HUD coordinated the final two conferences in its series of five forums with farmworker and colonia practitioners.

Cultivating Our Communities: A Statewide Practitioner Conference in Salinas, California, in April attracted 275 participants. In August, *Harvesting Hope for Our Community* drew 200 participants from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to Yakima, Washington. Previous conferences were held in Edinburgh, Texas; Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Miami, Florida.

Salinas is a small city with a large farmworker community about 60 miles south of San Jose. *Cultivating Our Communities* drew a diverse crowd of Federal, state and local governments, nonprofits, and faith-based and community organizations that serve colonias and migrant farmworker communities, and some farmworkers themselves. As HUD Regional Director Richard Rainey welcomed the crowd, he noted, “California is the nation’s leader in agriculture. We also need to be the nation’s leader in affordable housing for the farmworkers who make that possible.”

Participants enjoyed workshops on fair housing, homeownership, and grant programs. A pre-conference session taught participants how to build and maintain good web sites, even if funds are scarce. Conference partners included the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Economic Opportunities Commission of San Luis Obispo County Inc., the Housing Assistance Council, and the City of Salinas.

OF FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Rural and migrant farmworker communities in the Pacific Northwest face common housing, environmental, educational and employment problems, so HUD's final conference, *Harvesting Hope for Our Communities* was a tri-state affair for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

The conference took place in Yakima, 120 miles east of Seattle in the heart of central Washington's agricultural area. Yakima has a population of 85,000. Approximately 30 percent of the community — including hundreds of migrant and seasonal farmworkers — works in the agricultural business.

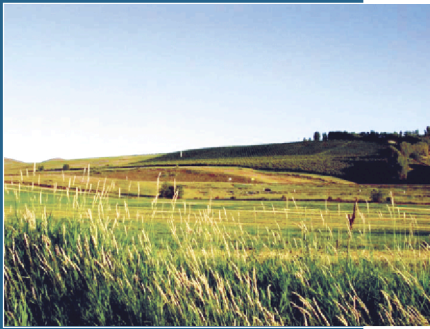
Like the Salinas conference, *Harvesting Hope* brought together a mix of government, private, and nonprofit organizations—as well as area growers—to develop practical strategies. It drew participants not only from the three-state area, but also from Colorado, Virginia,



A "Lideres Campesinas" workshop at Salinas conference develops leadership among women migrant workers.

"The contributions of migrant/farmworkers to the American 'bread basket' are significant, yet their plight for decent affordable housing and equal rights is far greater...Migrant/farmworkers may stoop to do their job, but at the end of the day they stand tall, proud, and with dignity."

—Jose Padilla
Executive Director
California Rural Legal Assistance
At the Cultivating Our Communities Farmworker Conference



Yakima, site of Harvesting Hope for Our Communities, is in the heart of Washington's agricultural area.

California, Nevada, and Montana. As one participant noted, "After 20 years in the business, I did not think I could get excited, but I did and came away energized and with new hope."

The event would not have been possible without the support of HUD's partners, the Community and Shelter Assistance Corporation of Oregon, the Idaho Housing and Finance Association, the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing, Northwest Regional Facilitators, Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), and the State of Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

HUD SEEKS FAITH-BASED PARTNERS

Faith-based and other grassroots groups are renewing America's communities every day. They provide important services and offer invaluable help to those who need it most. That is why HUD is actively trying to help "level the playing field" so that faith-based and other community organizations can participate in the Department's programs.

Through the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI), HUD makes it easier for smaller organizations, both religious and non-religious, to help HUD achieve its mission. CFBCI has conducted free grant writing workshops to teach faith-based and community organizations how to secure federal funding and how to write effective federal grant proposals. HUD specialists working with colonia and farmworker communities have been cross-trained so that they can offer additional sessions as the need arises.

CFBCI is committed to actively assisting organizations in the border region and farmworker communities. In particular, CFBCI is seeking at least 250 faith-based and community organizations interested in becoming HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agencies. For more information on finding funding, people who can help you, and other resources, visit: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fbci/about.cfm>.

SOME ONLINE RESOURCES



Children of farmworkers enjoy safe and affordable migrant farmworker housing in Yakima, Washington.

- **National Toolkit for Colonias and Farmworker Practitioners.** Information on funding sources and improving services to farmworkers and colonias residents, plus links to local information by state at www.hud.gov/colonias. You may also contact HUD staff by telephoning 202-708-3086.
- **Espanol.hud.gov.** HUD's Spanish language website has comprehensive information on homebuying, rental information, available HUD homes, loan counseling, and financial resources.
- **Use of HUD Resources To Assist Colonias** summarizes exemplary practices on contract for deed conversion, alternative building technologies, infrastructure, individual development accounts, and Self-Help/One Stop service centers. Find this resource at www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/lawsregs/notices/2003/03-10.pdf.
- **HUD's Manufactured Housing Program.** Consumer brochures on how to handle design and construction impediments in manufactured housing, available in English and Spanish at www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/mhs/mhshome.cfm.
- **Community Kiosks.** Simply push a button to find HUD homes for sale, apartments offering rental assistance, and information on housing counseling. To find one of HUD's 106 kiosks near you, visit www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf15/.
- **Rural Housing and Economic Development Gateway.** An important resource on rural housing and development issues. Reach English/Spanish-speaking rural experts toll-free at 1-877-RURAL-26. Rural Gateway provides information to organizations and links to other resources offering assistance at www.ruralhome.org/gateway.
- **www.grants.gov.** Access over 900 individual grant programs that award \$350 billion in grants each year. This "electronic storefront" lets potential applicants find funding opportunities at 26 federal agencies, then use a single process to apply securely online.